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United for Quality Care

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SEIU 1199NE  
Waleska Martinez  
Before the Human Services and  
Aging Committees

*In Support of* **SB 989 An Act Concerning Nursing Homes**

Good Afternoon Senator Lesser, Senator Hochadel, Representative Gilcrest, Representative Garibay, and members of the Human Services and Aging Committees. My name is Waleska Martinez, I live in New Britain, and I've worked as a Certified Nurses Assistant (CNA) at Amber Woods in Farmington for 8 years. I come before you today in support of SB 989 An Act Concerning Nursing Homes.

CNAs are responsible for feeding residents, helping them with hygiene, and ensuring they are safe. This in itself is time consuming, difficult work, but oftentimes CNAs end up helping with tasks that aren't in our job description because they need to get done. We return carts to the kitchens and do the dishes because we don't have enough dietary aides. This takes up 45 minutes of our time every meal.

Despite the challenges of this work, I love what I do. My residents are my main focus and I've grown to love them like family. They are very considerate and know we are short staffed. They see us trying our best and many residents are patient with us, but that is still not fair to them. On days we are short staffed we are hustling from 7am to well after our shift ends at 3pm. Last week we had three CNAs to 30 residents, and I ended up staying late to ensure they all got to take a shower.

On days like that we don't take breaks. It's hard as a professional caregiver to work in this environment. We are angry, frustrated, depressed, and leave everyday drained. When I get home I shut down. I never have the energy to spend time with my own family. How is that fair to me or my coworkers? Our love for our residents and our compassion is exploited and used against us. Our residents deserve better and so do we.

When we are staffed properly we are able to do our job. Residents are well groomed, showered, and we can actually slow down to talk to them and make them happy. When we are short we have to rush from one resident to the next and have no time to talk with them. It fills my heart to be able to socialize with patients because I know many of them aren't visited by friends and family. We are their friends and family.

This bill will help to address the issue of short staffing. By raising the staffing standard and creating enforcement mechanisms, the state can send a message that you care for residents and the people who care for them. Please do the right thing and pass SB 989.

Thank you.